

# Victim Impact Panels

## ▪ **PURPOSE—**

The DUI Victim Impact Panel provides audiences with unique information designed to decrease incidents of impaired driving.

## ▪ **WHO SPEAKS—**

- Victim's describe their lives before and after DUI collisions.
- Survivors describe the effects of losing loved ones to DUI's.
- Offenders describe life changes resulting from, sometimes, fatal DUI collisions.
- Law enforcement and fire department personnel share their experience of being a first responder at DUI collisions.

## ▪ **WHY CONDUCT VICTIM PANELS?**

More drunk/drugged drivers enter the criminal justice system than any other type of offender. Very few criminal justice programs offer a meaningful approach to combat drunk/drugged driving except for those offenders who are deemed to be alcoholic and in need of treatment.

Impaired driving offenders continue to kill nearly 17,000 victims each year.

## **WHO ATTENDS—**

Defendants convicted of such offenses as DUI, Reckless Endangerment, Hit and Run, Minor in Possession, Negligent Driving, Physical Control and Driving While Licenses Suspended/Revoked. Interested citizens, judges, attorneys, treatment providers and other referral sources may also attend as guests.

## **HOW CAN YOU HELP?**

Share your own experience on a Victim Impact Panel or tell someone you know about the opportunity. A life could be changed or even saved by your words.

### Walla Walla County Victim Impact Panels

#### **DATE**

English—2nd Tuesday of each month  
Spanish—Quarterly (call for dates)

#### **TIME**

Panels begin promptly at 7:00 p.m. We are open for 30 minutes prior to each Panel for registration

#### **LOCATION**

General Hospital Auditorium  
1025 S. 2nd, Walla Walla

#### **COST**

\$30 in cash or money order  
\$40 for missed appointments

Walla Walla County Traffic Safety  
and DUI Task Force

# Walla Walla County DUI Victim Impact Panel

Walla Walla County Traffic Safety...

"Helping keep drivers, passengers  
and pedestrians safe"

**Telephone: 509.524.2936**  
**PO Box 1595**  
**1520 Kelly Place**  
**Walla Walla, WA 99362**

# Interested in being a Panel Speaker?

*Questions and answers about the DUI Victim Impact Panel for the possible new speaker—*

## ***WHAT IS THE VICTIM IMPACT PANEL?***

The first DUI Victim Impact Panel was held in Washington State in 1986. It was believed that if offenders could hear victims tell their stories, see the pictures of people who had been hurt or killed in drunk driving collisions and the personal consequences, change would occur. As this program has been proven effective, the majority of judges in Washington now order individuals with alcohol related driving offences to attend the victim panel as part of their sentencing.

## ***HOW OFTEN WILL I SPEAK?***

Victim Impact Panels are held monthly (Spanish speaking only Panels are held quarterly) in the evening on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. Speakers are reminded each month of the date and time. How often you speak is up to you.

## ***DO I HAVE TO STAY FOR THE WHOLE PROGRAM?***

No. Most speakers prefer to stay to the end and process the panel. Some, because of other obligations, leave as soon as they have spoken.

## ***HOW LONG SHOULD MY PRESENTATION BE?***

A general rule is that on each panel there will be 2-4 speakers, so most panel speakers will speak for approximately 20 minutes.

## ***WHAT IS THE BEST WAY OF TELLING MY STORY?***

Everyone has their own unique way of sharing and that should not be changed. It is not necessary to be eloquent or a professional speaker, you already have the words. With a limited amount of time, it is important to focus on the details that will impact the offender. But the most importantly, remember to speak from the heart.

If you have any pictures you would feel comfortable sharing, they can be scanned and projected on the screen.

## ***I'M REALLY ANGRY, WILL I BE EFFECTIVE?***

Of course you're angry! Who wouldn't be? But, like all human beings, the offenders who attend will turn off emotionally and not listen if they feel preached at, accused or condemned. Anger is part of the grief process and there is nothing wrong with stating it as long as it is not focused at "you drunk drivers". It is important to talk about how you feel and anger is part of that, but try to remember to use "I" statement and avoid "you" statements. This does not mean that you should soft pedal anything, only that you won't get your message across if you are blaming and accusatory. Remember that the rea-

son we are here is to help offenders personalize the tragic consequences of drinking and driving.

## ***ARE SPEAKERS PAID TO BE ON THE VICTIM PANEL?***

Speakers are given a small stipend for the time they volunteer.

## ***WILL SPEAKING ON THE VICTIM PANEL HELP ME?***

Many speakers would answer yes! Some victims and offenders want to put it behind them and try to forget. Others find the way to healing through verbalizing their feelings and coming to the realization that a life could actually be changed or even saved by their words. Only you can decide if this is right for you. It will be painful, there is no way to avoid that, but just living after a significant loss or trauma is painful. Grief, anger, and guilt are dealt with in different ways by each of us so each case is unique.

## ***WILL VICTIMS AND OFFENDER BE ON THE SAME PANEL?***

Yes, but with discretion. Victims always know when an offender is going to speak and they will have the choice. Panels are always coordinated with the speakers as well as the referrals in mind.